

Application Serial No. 09/665,018

REMARKS

The Applicants and the undersigned thank Examiner Colin for his careful review of this application. Claims 1-14 have been rejected. Upon entry of this amendment, Claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

The independent claims are Claims 1, 8, and 11. Consideration of the present application is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments to the application and in view of the following remarks.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification because of an informality found on page 4 of the originally filed specification. Specifically, the Examiner discovered a typographical error for the reference numeral used in connection with the local workstation assessment service.

The originally filed specification used reference numeral "115" when the correct reference numeral --135-- was intended. The Applicants have amended the specification in accordance with the Examiner's helpful comments. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 & 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-11 and 13-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,434,615 to Dinh et al (hereinafter the "Dinh" reference).

The Examiner rejected Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Dinh reference in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,584,454 to Hummel, Jr. et al. (hereinafter the "Hummel" reference). The Applicants respectfully offer remarks to traverse these pending rejections.

Independent Claim 1

The rejection of Claim 1 is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the Dinh and Hummel references fail to describe, teach, or suggest the combination of (1) issuing a request for a scanner from a browser operating on the workstation to a network server via a computer network; (2) transmitting the scanner from the network server to

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the workstation via the computer network, the scanner installable within the browser and operative to complete a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that can compromise secure operation of the workstation on the computer network; and (3) generating workstation credentials in response to the scanner conducting the vulnerability assessment of the workstation, as recited in amended Claim 1.

The Dinh reference describes a controlling computer system 120 for performing remote system administration upon a stand alone computer system 110. The controlling computer system 120 accesses the stand alone computer system 110 through a communications network using a remote communication protocol 130. See Figure 1 of Dinh reproduced below.

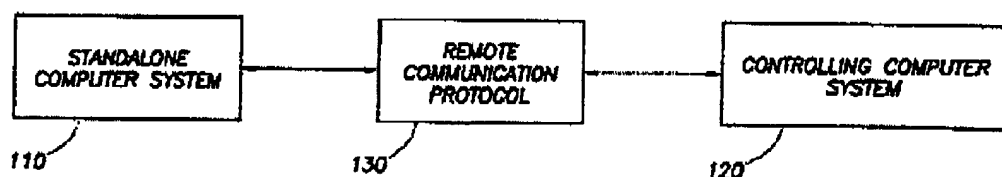


FIG.1

After establishing a connection with the stand alone computer system 110, a preexisting diagnostic application on the stand alone computer system 110 is initiated using the established communication between the controlling computer system 120 and the stand alone computer system 110. See Dinh reference, column 2, lines 13-24.

The Dinh reference explains that the controlling computer system 120 will perform an overview status check on the remote stand alone computer system 110. Such a status will yield information such as the remote stand alone computer's processor type, the total memory in the remote stand alone computer system 110, and peripheral devices that are interfaced with the remote stand alone computer system 110. The Dinh reference further explains that the controlling computer system 120 will be able to display a screen that is substantially similar to the screen that would be displayed if a local diagnostic application were executed locally on the remote stand alone computer system 110. See Dinh reference, column 4, line 59 through column 5, line 2.

One of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that the remote diagnostic controlling computer system 120 described by the Dinh reference does not issue a request for a scanner from a browser because the computer system 120 is not a workstation and

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because the stand alone computer system 110 already has a preexisting diagnostic application. The Dinh reference explains that it is the controlling computer system 120 that initiates a request to the stand alone computer system 110. See Dinh reference, column 6, lines 4-6.

Further, the computer system 120 does not transmit a scanner that is installable within a browser and that is operative to complete a vulnerability assessment of a workstation in order to identify security vulnerabilities that can compromise secure operation of the workstation on the computer network, as recited in amended Claim 1. Dinh only describes a remote computer diagnostic system 120 that does not address any security aspects whatsoever. In other words, one of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that the diagnostic information reviewed by the Dinh reference does not relate in any way to security vulnerabilities.

To address the transmission of a scanner over a computer network as recited in Claim 1, the Examiner referred the Applicants to column 7, lines 14-67 of the Dinh reference. This portion of the Dinh reference describes steps 430 through 450 as illustrated in Figure 4 of the Dinh reference. Figure 4 of the Dinh reference is reproduced below:

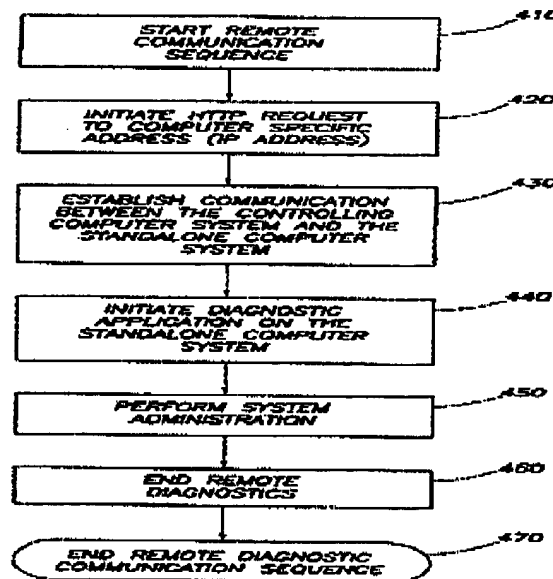


FIG. 4

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The Dinh reference explains that in step 430 communication is established between the controlling computer system 110 and the stand alone computer system 120 using the remote communication protocol 130. Next in step 440, the controlling computer system 110 sends requests to a diagnostic application, such as Compaq Diagnostics®, that is running the stand alone computer system 120 to gather hardware and software information and to perform diagnostic tests. See Dinh reference, column 7, lines 30-34 and lines 55-57.

In step 450, the remote control computer system 120 performs system administration on the stand alone computer system 110. The system administration tasks performed on the stand alone computer system 110 include inspection of the hardware and software, status checks, hardware tests, and asset management. See Dinh reference column 7, lines 58-64.

The steps described above and as illustrated in Figure 4 of the Dinh reference do not show any transmission of a scanner from a network server to the workstation via the computer network, where the scanner is installable within the browser and operative to complete a vulnerability assessment of the workstation, as alleged by the Examiner. Further, the Dinh reference does not provide any teaching of a vulnerability assessment of the workstation that identifies security vulnerabilities that can compromise secure operation of the workstation on the computer network.

The Applicants remind the Examiner that for a rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. § 102, MPEP § 2131 (8th Ed., Rev. 2, May 2004) states:

TO ANTICIPATE A CLAIM, THE REFERENCE MUST
TEACH EVERY ELEMENT OF THE CLAIM...The
identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as
is contained in the claim. Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.,
9 USPQ 2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989)."

The Applicants submit that the Examiner has not shown the identical invention in as complete detail as is contained in amended independent Claim 1. Because the Dinh reference does not teach any aspects of computer security, the Applicants submit that this reference fails to teach numerous elements recited in independent Claim 1 and therefore, the Dinh reference fails to anticipate amended independent Claim 1.

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The Examiner admits that the Dinh reference fails to provide any teaching of a log-in page or access denied page. As noted above, the Dinh reference does not pertain to computer security and therefore, log-in pages or access denied pages would never be described in a diagnostic system such as the Dinh reference. To make up for these deficiencies, the Examiner relies upon the Hummel reference.

The Hummel reference describes a method and system for delivering protected software applications 128 to remote systems 104 from a central service facility 110. Delivery of the protected software applications 128 is managed on the basis of the level of security clearance and on the basis of community membership of the remote system user. See Figure 5 of the Hummel reference reproduced below.

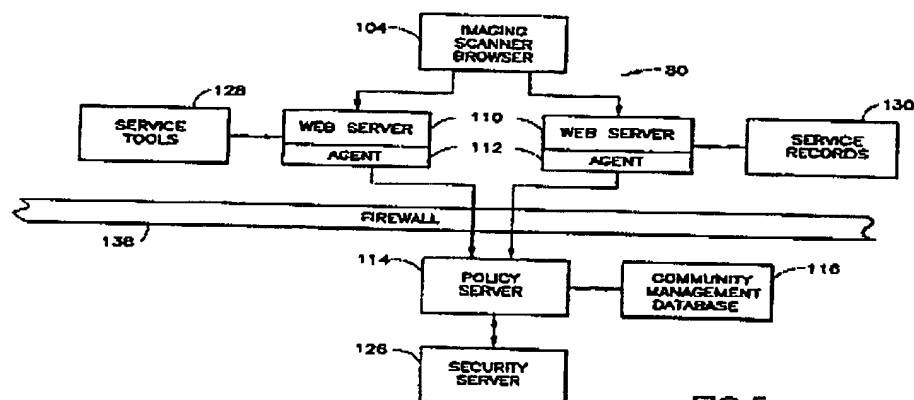


FIG. 5

Remote systems 104 of the Hummel reference typically include magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) systems, computerized tomography (CT) systems, or ultrasound imaging systems. The system of the Hummel reference is designed to allow a field service engineer to use a browser running on a remote system, such as an MRI scanner 104, to access web servers 110 over the Internet 80. When the field service engineer provides either a one or two-factor security clearance to the web servers 110, the agents 112 will check with the policy server 114 and security server 126 to determine if the field service engineer's security clearance is valid. The policy server 114 accesses a community management database 116 that stores access rights for remote system users. If the field service engineer's security clearance is valid, then the engineer will have access to files and applications in the service tools 128 for updating the MRI from its browser 104. See Hummel reference, column 8, lines 1-68.

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One of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that the Hummel reference does not provide any teaching of transmitting a scanner from a network server to the workstation via the computer network, in which the scanner is installable within the browser and operative to complete a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that can compromise secure operation of the workstation on the computer network, as recited in amended independent Claim 1. While the Hummel reference does provide secure access to applications that can be downloadable from a network, the Hummel reference is not concerned with assessing the vulnerability of a workstation.

In light of the differences between Claim 1 and the Dinh and Hummel references, one of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that these prior art references, alone or in combination, cannot anticipate or render obvious the recitations as set forth in amended independent Claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 8

The rejection of Claim 8 is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the Dinh and Hummel references, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the combination of (1) issuing a request for a scanner to a network server from a browser operating on the workstation; (2) transmitting the scanner and a workstation policy from the network server to the workstation via the computer network, the scanner installable within the browser and operative to generate workstation credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation; and (3) comparing the workstation credentials to the workstation policy on the workstation to determine whether the workstation should be granted access to the software service, as recited in Claim 8.

As noted above with respect to independent Claim 1, neither the Dinh reference nor the Hummel reference provide a teaching of transmitting a scanner from the network server to a workstation via a computer network, wherein the scanner is installable within the browser and operative to generate workstation credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network, as recited in Claim 11. Further, neither the Dinh reference nor the Hummel reference provides a

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teaching of transmitting a workstation policy from the network server to the workstation via the computer network, as recited in Claim 8.

In light of the differences between Claim 8 and the references mentioned above, one of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that the prior art references, alone or in combination, cannot anticipate or render obvious the recitations as set forth in independent Claim 8. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 11

The rejection of Claim 11 is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the Dinh and Hummel references, fail to describe, teach, or suggest the combination of (1) issuing a request for a scanner to the network server from a browser operating on the workstation; (2) transmitting the scanner from the network server to the workstation via the computer network, the scanner installable within the browser and operative to generate workstation credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network; (3) transmitting the workstation security credentials from the scanner to the network server via the computer network; and (4) determining at the network server whether the workstation should be granted access to a network service of the network based on the workstation credentials, as recited in Claim 11.

As noted above with respect to independent Claim 1, neither the Dinh reference nor the Hummel reference provide a teaching of transmitting a scanner from the network server to a workstation via a computer network, wherein the scanner is installable within the browser and operative to generate workstation credentials by completing a vulnerability assessment of the workstation to identify security vulnerabilities that would compromise the secure operation of the workstation on the computer network, as recited in Claim 11. Further, neither the Dinh reference nor the Hummel reference provides a teaching of determining at the network server whether the workstation should be granted access to a network service of the network based on the workstation credentials, as recited in Claim 11.

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In light of the differences between Claim 11 and the references mentioned above, one of ordinary skill in the art recognizes that the prior art references, alone or in combination, cannot anticipate or render obvious the recitations as set forth in independent Claim 11. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims 2-7, 9-10, and 12-20

The Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified dependent claims are allowable because the independent claims from which they depend are patentable over the cited references.

The Applicants have added dependent Claims 15-20 to emphasize the difference between workstation credentials and credentials associated with a user. The workstation credentials are used to determine if a workstation should be allowed to proceed with authenticating a user. In this way, if the workstation credentials indicate that authentication of a user should not be allowed to proceed, then the authentication process is terminated before a user presents his or her credentials over the computer network.

The Applicants also respectfully submit that the recitations of all the dependent claims are of patentable significance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the dependent claims are respectfully requested.


CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action mailed on March 12, 2004. The Applicants and the undersigned thank Examiner Colin for the consideration of these remarks. The Applicants have submitted remarks to traverse the rejections of Claims 1-14. The Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such Action is hereby courteously solicited.

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If any issues remain that may be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at 404.572.2884.

Respectfully submitted,


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